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# ART IN MERICA

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## MANTEGNA AND MELOZZO

by WILLIAM E. SUIDA

## GEORGE ELBERT BURR AND THE WESTERN LANDSCAPE

by A. REYNOLDS MORSE

## A PARALLEL OF AMERICAN STYLES

by JOHN FABIAN KIENITZ

## A FOURTH CENTURY IVORY STATUETTE

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## GEORGE INNESS, AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTER

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## MORE ABOUT JENNYS

by AGNES M. DODS



## ANNOUNCING

A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *ART IN AMERICA*  
FOR OCTOBER, 1946, ON

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FIG. 1. MANTEGNA: CRUCIFIXION  
*New-York Historical Society*



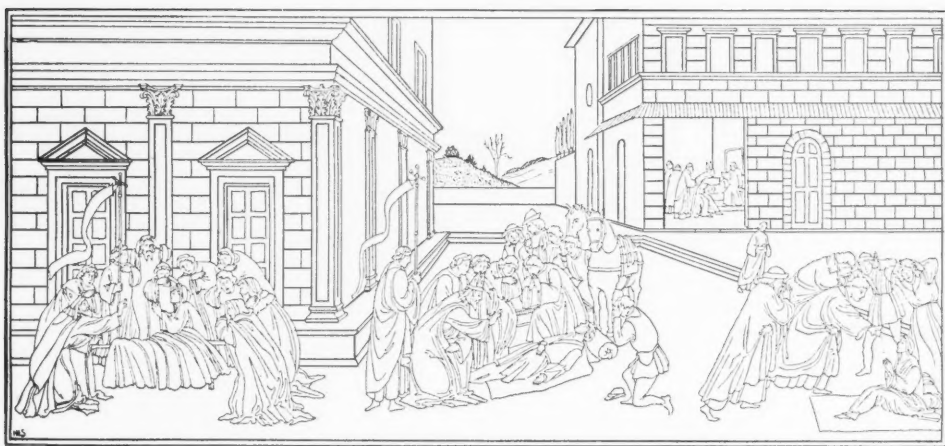
# ART IN AMERICA

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXIV

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## Mantegna and Melozzo

By WILLIAM E. SUIDA  
Forest Hills, New York

### I

DURING the second half of the nineteenth century the conception of the art of Andrea Mantegna underwent fluctuations analogous to those of other great artists of the Renaissance: a newly awakened spirit of criticism degenerated into the exaggeration that genuine originals which had, since centuries, traditionally borne the correct artist's name, were banished into the school or into the circle of imitators of the great artist. Although Giovanni Morelli is the most characteristic representative of this point of view in art criticism, he was by no means its only adherent.

To cite an example: the half-length picture of St. Mark in the Staedel Art Institute at Frankfurt on the Main, despite its genuine and complete signature, had to be rediscovered as a work of Mantegna by Berenson<sup>1</sup> and Fiocco.<sup>2</sup> Even the catalogue of the Staedel Gallery itself had given up

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Berenson: *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, Oxford, 1932, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup>Giuseppe Fiocco: *Mantegna*, Collezione Valori Plastici, Ulrico Hoepli, Milano, 1937, p. 199.

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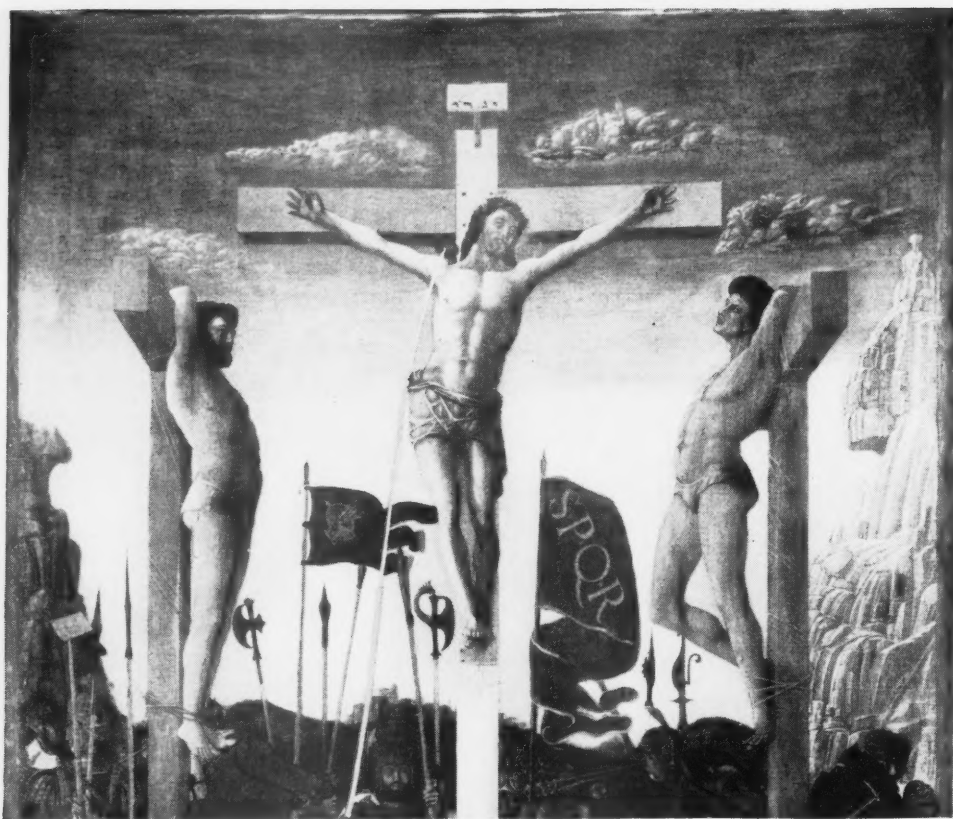


FIG. 1a. MANTEGNA: CRUCIFIXION (detail)  
New-York Historical Society

the name of Mantegna following Morelli's attribution to Francesco del Cossa, making room for all those irresponsible assumptions, attributing it to Bonsignori, Zoppo, Gentile Bellini, and others, which had been expressed during the course of the years by otherwise quite reasonable art historians.

With the bequest of the Bryan Collection in 1867, the Historical Society in New York acquired among other treasures a painting representing the *Crucifixion*<sup>3</sup> (Figs. 1 and 1a); the traditional attribution to Mantegna was first contradicted by Berenson.<sup>4</sup> In its stead the name of Jacopo da Montagnana, by Bode even that of the Milanese Bramantino, were proposed. This procedure is characteristic for innumerable other misattributions of that era; in place of the name of the great leading artist a name from the closer or further removed circle was put, which, in its own

<sup>3</sup>Catalogue of the Gallery of Art of the New-York Historical Society, New York, 1915, p. 63, no. B. 45—on canvas 33 x 23 inches.

<sup>4</sup>*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1896, XV, p. 198.

peculiarity, was then well-nigh unknown. Gradually these less famous artists whose names had been misused became better known, and the unfeasibility of these misattributions revealed itself. Today we have a precise enough knowledge of Jacopo da Montagnana as well as of Bramantino, so that we can state that neither of them can be considered for the authorship of the *Crucifixion* at the Historical Society. Nevertheless, the literature on Mantegna did not bother any further with this splendid picture. P. Kristeller,<sup>5</sup> who surely never saw the painting, simply referred to Berenson's article of 1896.

I am greatly obliged to Mr. Shelley who made it possible for me to examine carefully the painting of the *Crucifixion*. I do not doubt that this painting is an original by Andrea Mantegna. In the foreground we see the groups of Saints who are busied around the Sainted Mother of God, as well as of dice-playing soldiers. The background is filled with a crowd of soldiers, partly on horseback. The most striking feature in the execution of the painting is the fine draughtsmanship, which we can fully enjoy, thanks to the good state of preservation. The draperies of the garments are heightened with gold with the greatest of care, a technique, as we know, favored by Mantegna. It accentuates his virtuosity in draughtmanship, but it is extremely seldom used by his imitators. For the peculiar formations of the rocks we find parallels in Mantegna's *Adoration of the Shepherds* at the Metropolitan Museum.

The *Crucifixion* of the Predella of the San Zeno altarpiece at Verona (today at the Louvre in Paris) lends itself best for a comparison with the New York picture. Not a single feature is exactly alike, yet the basic conception as well as the artistic rendering are identical. There must have existed a second *Crucifixion* which seems to be lost, but copied in an old drawing, at the Uffizi in Florence.<sup>6</sup> In this lost painting the figures of Christ and of the two thieves were rather similar to the corresponding ones in the Paris picture. The missing picture must have been chronologically close to the San Zeno Predella. The picture in the Historical Society, New York, however, shows features that would point to a somewhat later date of origin. The crowded arrangement of the figures does not surprise, when we recall the Epiphany Altar of the Uffizi, or the *Triumph of Caesar* at Hampton Court. The calmly flowing contours of the figures of the two thieves, especially of the one to the right of Christ, explain the fact that Bode evidently was reminded of the *Crucifixion* by Bramantino at the

<sup>5</sup>P. Kristeller: *Andrea Mantegna*, 1902, p. 475.

<sup>6</sup>This drawing is mentioned by Kristeller, p. 481, as by "a weak imitator of the young Mantegna."



FIG. 2. MANTEGNA: MADONNA  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



FIG. 3. PUPIL OF MANTEGNA: MADONNA AND CHILD  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Brera. The Lombard painter might have actually seen this one or a similar painting by Mantegna. In the *Crucifixion* of the Historical Society we notice at the lower edge of the painting a cartello, which, originally, seems to have borne an inscription or a signature.

Another painting which deserves more attention than is usually given to it is the *Madonna with Angels* (Fig. 2) in the Metropolitan Museum. There we find an extraordinary beauty in the motive and, in the well preserved portions, that subtle refinement and mastership in details, we had admired in the *Crucifixion*. I think it is too modest to attribute this beautiful painting to the "Workshop of Mantegna."<sup>7</sup> The difference between an original by his own hand and a "workshop" painting is plainly visible when we compare the Metropolitan Madonna with a similar composition in the Boston Museum (Fig. 3), which does not show any of those refined details in its execution. Peculiarities analogous to the Boston picture can be observed in some other paintings, for instance in the *Madonna with S. Giuliana* in the Museo del Castel Vecchio, Verona.

The third painting by Mantegna which I want to discuss, the half figure of the Virgin with folded hands, bears the master's signature (Fig. 4). As though absorbed in her thoughts the Virgin looks up from a book, which lies in front of her upon a reading desk. In the background is a hill, crowned by fortified buildings.<sup>8</sup> The date of origin of the painting seems to be fixed by the fact that the head of the Madonna, as well as her costume in general, corresponds with that of the Madonna of the San Zeno Altarpiece. The type of the landscape finds a close parallel in the background of the *St. George* at the Accademia in Venice. Consequently it seems plausible to assume ca. 1460 as the date of origin. The halo as a dark disk with phantastic oriental glypticlike ornamentation occurs frequently in Mantegna's oeuvre, such as in the Madonna of San Zeno and in the Madonna which passed into the National Gallery in Washington with the Kress Collection. Evidently Mantegna took over this peculiarity from the pictures of his father-in-law, Jacopo Bellini.

The form of the signature "ANDREAS PAT" is rather unusual. Above all it is striking that the artist who was born the son of Biagio from Isola di Cartura, refers to himself as "Patavinus," from Padua. Even though this signature does not have an equal in any of his other works, we can find parallels for it in numerous documents. I quote them after P. Kristeller, "Andrea Mantegna": 1449 "M. Andrea da Padova dipintore" is active

<sup>7</sup>The Metropolitan Museum of Art. A Catalogue of Italian, Spanish and Byzantine Paintings by Harry B. Wehle, New York, 1940, p. 128 fol.

<sup>8</sup>Linseed oil painting on thin canvas, 65.5 x 57 cm, private property, New York.



FIG. 4. MANTEGNA: MADONNA  
*Private Collection, New York*

for the duke of Ferrara; 1450 he is called "Andreas Mantegna, pictor, habitator Paduae." Nevertheless in 1456 we read: "Andreas Blasii Mantegna de Vincenzia, Pictor." In the year 1464, the humanist Felice Feliciano refers to him as "Andreas Mantegna Patavus (Patavinus), amicus incomparabilis." Even in the year 1480 we hear of "Andreas Mantegna, quondam honorabili viri Ser Blasii de Padua," and the decree of the Marquis Federigo, of June 8, 1481 calls him explicitly: "Pictorem egregium Andream Mantegnam Patavinum." During his late years, as for instance in 1504, he is called "Dominus Andreas Mantinea, filius quondam Blasii, pictor eximius civisque et habitator Mantuae." From all this emerges clearly that a signature from about 1460 as "Andreas Patavinus" cannot be considered a surprise.

Heretofore only one single portrait drawing has been attributed with some certainty to Andrea Mantegna, the great portrait painter. It is the splendid likeness of a Venetian Senator in the Collection of the Christ Church College at Oxford.<sup>9</sup> The attribution to Mantegna, first advanced by Hadeln, has great plausibility. Yet I believe that another sheet, in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Fig. 5), shows even clearer connections with the painted portraits: this is a chalk drawing, bust portrait of a nobleman about forty years old, which is designated by a later inscription on a strip of paper, glued on to it, as the portrait of Francesco Sforza by the hand of Bartolommeo Bramantino.<sup>10</sup> Both of these indications are undoubtedly erroneous; the sitter is not Francesco Sforza,<sup>11</sup> and neither has the sheet any connection with Bramantino. Nevertheless this work of art is a masterpiece and the attribution to Mantegna is convincing because of its connection with the portraits in the murals in the Camera degli Sposi (see Fig. 6).

Many of us will remember a painting which was exhibited in the "Masterpieces of Art" Exhibition at the World's Fair, New York, in 1939: The profile of a beardless man supposed to be the humanist, Ianus Pannonius.<sup>12</sup> If I am not mistaken I had been the first to recognize in it Mantegna's hand when I saw it, two decades ago, in Vienna. There exists

<sup>9</sup>Italian Drawings. Exhibited at the Royal Academy, Burlington House, London, 1930, MCMXXXI, p. 49, no. 177, attr. to Francesco Bonsignori (?).

<sup>10</sup>Meder-Schonbrunner, Albertina publ. no. 1219.

<sup>11</sup>The best information about Francesco Sforza's portraits is given by Fern Rusk Shapley, "A Portrait of Francesco Sforza," *The Art Quarterly*, vol. VIII, Winter 1945, p. 25 fol. The identification of the sitter of a portrait in The Widener Collection (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.) as Francesco Sforza is a fortunate discovery.

<sup>12</sup>*Masterpieces of Art*, official Catalogue, 1939, p. 114, no. 233, on canvas, 9½ x 7½ inches.



FIG. 5. MANTEGNA: PORTRAIT OF A MAN (drawing)  
Uffizi, Florence



FIG. 6. MANTEGNA: PORTRAIT (detail)  
*Camera degli Sposi, Mantua*



another profile portrait of an elderly man in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan,<sup>13</sup> which is stylistically closely connected with the New York picture (Fig. 7). The varying attributions, first to Cosimo Tura, then to Francesco Bonsignori are not at all convincing. The masterpiece of Bonsignori's portraiture is the signed piece in the National Gallery in London, with the preparatory drawing in the Albertina. Yet with all its solid craftsmanship this painting does not reach up to the concise power of the Milanese profile. Furthermore there are several seemingly unimportant details which correspond perfectly in both the profiles of New York as well as that of Milan. These are: The treatment of the light, the shadows of the parts behind the ear and on the neck, as well as the reflected light against the background of the contour. The same peculiarity can also be observed in the Camera degli Sposi in the profile of the young Gian Francesco Gonzaga, in the scene representing the meeting of the Marquis Lodovico with Cardinal Francesco.

My friend Giuseppe Fiocco published in his book on Mantegna a pen drawing of a seated man in profile from the Uffizi Gallery,<sup>14</sup> assuming it to be a copy after a figure from Mantegna's perished paintings of the Innocenz VIII Chapel in Rome. Many years ago I discussed the same sheet in a different connection as an original drawing by the hand of Bramante.<sup>15</sup> After renewed studies of the artistically very important original, I do not see any reason to change my former opinion. The drawing is of far superior quality than a copy; it is surely an original of the fifteenth century and is stylistically most closely connected with the few certain works by Bramante.

Documents give proof that Mantegna also contributed various plans for the tapestry manufacturers which flourished at that time at the court of the Gonzagas. A single product of this type of art has withstood time to bear living testimony to this fact. This is the magnificent tapestry with the representation of the Annunciation with the crest of the Gonzagas which has passed into the Chicago Museum with the Ryerson Collection. The figures as well as the architecture and landscape contain so many elements characteristic of Mantegna that we can without hesitation ascribe to him the plan. In the details we have to count with a certain license of the Arazziere. From the purely technical point of view this arazzo of the Annunciation is a miracle, and belongs among the most perfect speci-

<sup>13</sup>No. 627 in the Catalogo, 1927, on panel, 33 x 25 cm.

<sup>14</sup>Fiocco, *Mantegna* (1937), p. 205, tav. 110.

<sup>15</sup>Die Jugendwerke des Bartolomeo Suardi gen. Bramantino, *Jahrbuch der Kunstsammlungen des A. H. Kaiserhauses*, XXV, Wien 1904-05, p. 16.

mens which we know of this type of art. This important piece has always been connected with Mantegna by the specialized literature,<sup>16</sup> but the monographs on the artist silently passed it by.

## II

Following this discussion on Mantegna we want to speak about his younger contemporary Melozzo da Forlì, in order to clarify the neglected question of the connection between the two great artists.

Only a small part of Melozzo da Forlì's oeuvre has come down to us. When, in 1938, the town of Forlì arranged an exhibition of old paintings in honor of Melozzo, the following, slightly exaggerated slogan was coined: "La Mostra di Melozzo — senza Melozzo." (The Exhibition of Melozzo — without Melozzo.) Never has an exhibition been more carefully prepared, nor a catalogue been worked out more conscientiously than the one of this "Mostra di Melozzo." With the utmost thoroughness Cesare Gnudi analyzed all the reasons as well as objections for the attributions of all the paintings given to Melozzo, so that the attentive spectator had a precise anthology of all the aspects of the dispute at his disposal.

With Melozzo's certified works, the large mural from the Biblioteca Vaticana, and the fragments of the decoration of the dome of Santi Apostoli, today in the Pinacoteca Vaticana and in the Palazzo del Quirinale, the two panels, painted on both sides, in the Uffizi Gallery, are approximately homogeneous; they represent the *Annunciation* and on the reverse, the fragments (lower parts) of two Saints. In the dome frescoes of the Santuario of Loreto as well as in those of the Capella Feo in San Biagio in Forlì it is not easy to draw the line between Melozzo's own work and the share his pupils had in the execution.

The famous Pestapepe who, once upon a time, served as decoration for a grocery store at Forlì, R. Longhi<sup>17</sup> convincingly attributed to the Ferrarese painter Francesco Cossa. The preserved panels of the decoration of the former library of Federigo da Montefeltre in the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino do not give any support to the vague tradition that Melozzo took part in their execution. The two large paintings in San Marco in Rome, representing St. Mark the Evangelist, and Pope Marcus, can only be attributed to Melozzo presupposing a considerable chronological distance

<sup>16</sup>G. L. Hunter, *The Gonzaga Annunciation Tapestry*, *Art in America* II, 1913-14, p. 147 ff.  
Phyllis Ackermann, *Art in America*, 1925 (Nr. 5).  
Heinrich Goebel, *Wandteppiche* II, 1928, p. 403 fol.

<sup>17</sup>R. Longhi, *Officina Ferrarese*, 1934, p. 47, tav. 57.

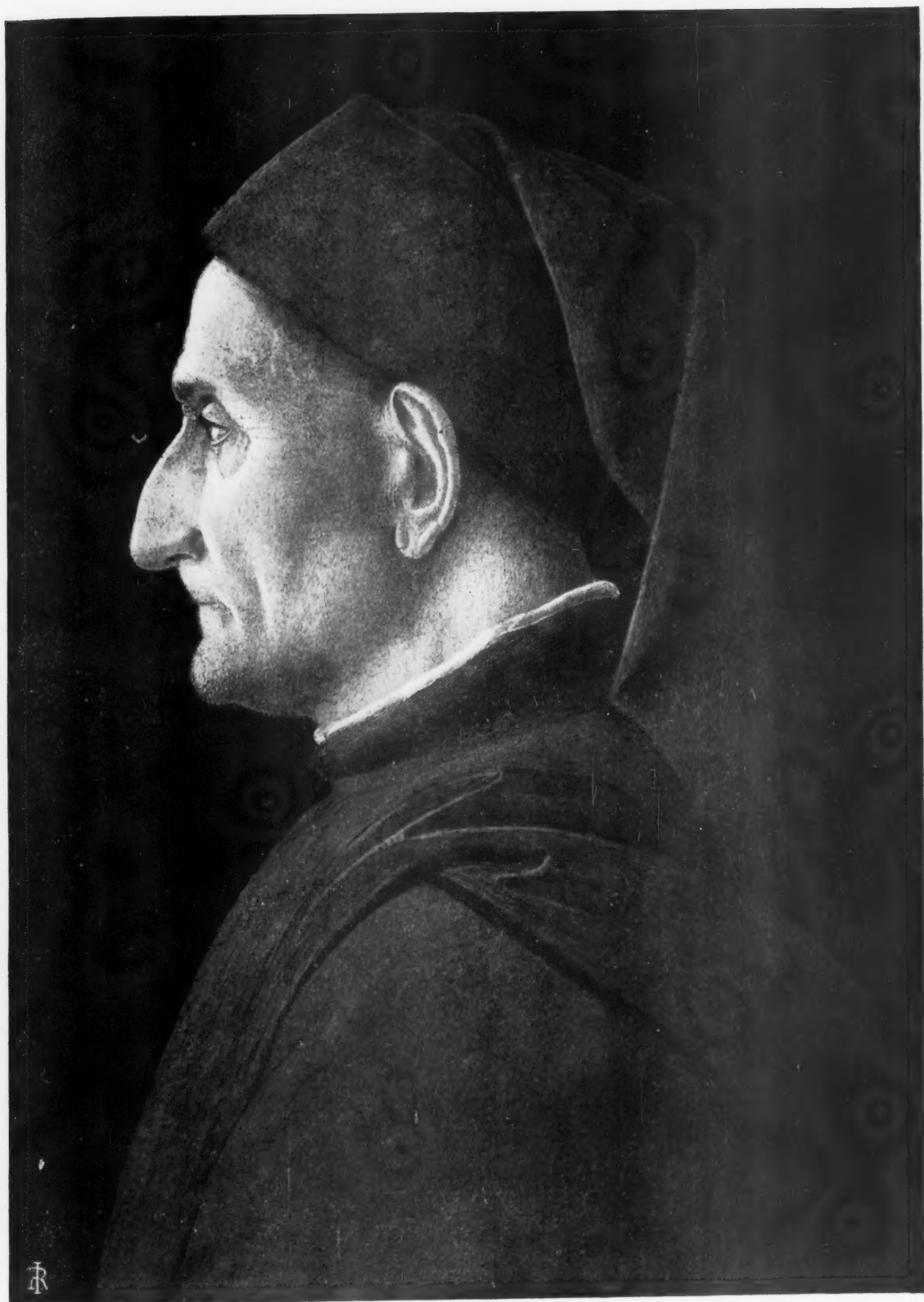


FIG. 7. MANTEGNA: PROFILE PORTRAIT  
*Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan*

from the murals in Rome. As a whole the Mostra di Melozzo strengthened the careful, reserved critics, without contributing any essential fact to the discussion of Melozzo's artistic origin.

Consequently the limitation to a registering of the heretofore expressed hypotheses was accepted as far as the last mentioned point was concerned.<sup>18</sup> Seb. Serlio<sup>19</sup> praises Melozzo's Angels in the Sacristy of the Santuario at Loreto side by side with Mantegna's paintings in the Castello at Mantua as masterpieces of perspective. L. Lanzi<sup>20</sup> is the first one to discuss the question of the origin of Melozzo's art. He hesitates to accept the latter's compatriot Ansuino da Forlì of whose activity in Padua only the signed fresco in the Ovetari Chapel of the Eremitani bears testimony. Lanzi cautiously restrains all who claim Piero della Francesca as Melozzo's teacher, by stating that it is perfectly plausible to assume that the master of Forlì had seen the works of Piero at the Vatican, when he himself later worked in Rome. After a thorough consideration of all the facts Lanzi finds these excellent words: "Nel totale del suo gusto (Melozzo) si appressa al Mantegna e alla scuola Padovana piu che a niun altra." (Considering all, Melozzo's style comes closer to Mantegna's and that of the School of Padua than to any other.)

More recent critics did not follow this conception: Schmarsow, Cavalcaselle, A. Venturi, Gronau, Longhi, Gnudi are united in their derivation of Melozzo's art from that of Piero della Francesca, who is very much admired, and rightfully so, but whose historical importance is unquestionably overrated.

It has been accepted as a fact that Melozzo's relation to Mantegna was limited to abstract and perspective methods of construction, and that direct formal similarities are nowhere to be found; this is very erroneous. All we have to do is to compare the lower half of St. Prosdócimo in the fragment of an altar by Melozzo in the Uffizi Gallery (Fig. 8) with the analogous figure of Mantegna's Lucas Altar at the Brera (Fig. 9). Here chance must be completely excluded; the similarity is too striking. Since the Lucas Altarpiece belongs to the rather early works of Mantegna, about 1453-1454, its chronological priority can not be doubted. Moreover the closest, and the only contemporary parallel of Melozzo's votive fresco (1475-1476) of the Vatican Library is to be found in Mantegna's Representation scene in the Camera degli Sposi (1469-1472).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Mostra di Melozzo e del Quattrocento Romagnolo, Forlì, 1938, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>*Regole Generali di Architettura*. 1551.

<sup>20</sup>*Storia pittorica dell' Italia*, Bassano, 1809, v. 34.

<sup>21</sup>Fr. O. Opponen, Melozzo etc. Helsinki, 1910, p. 62.





FIG. 8. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ: SAINT PRODOCIMO  
(fragment)  
*Uffizi, Florence*



FIG. 9. MANTEGNA: SAINT PRODOCIMO  
(detail)  
*Brera Gallery, Milan*

These connections are most vividly illuminated by a small, recently rediscovered painting. It is a fragment of a formerly rather extensive altar panel, representing the half-figure of a lute-playing angel, seen in foreshortening (Fig. 10).<sup>22</sup> The dress is of a light slate grey with sleeves of a vivid blue; the wings are of dark wine color; a large light reddish wing at the right side of the picture, and small parts of a fluttering yellow-brown garment belong to a destroyed neighboring figure. The knob of a bishop's crozier crossing the angel's figure reminds us of gnarled branches in the treatment of its details. The halo consists of a light brownish-yellow disk

<sup>22</sup>On panel, 33.5 x 21 cm.



FIG. 10. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ: ANGEL (fragment)  
*Private Collection, New York*



FIGS. 11 AND 12. MELOZZO DA FORLÌ: ANGELS (fragments)  
*National Gallery of Art, Washington*

covered with closely-spaced light dots; exactly the same, very peculiar, even unique form, which can be found also in the grandiose figures of angels in the Vatican. The total coloristic effect is light; the application of color thin, in the manner of glazing, so that the structure of the drawing underneath remained plainly visible, lending the picture the effect of a colored drawing. In all probability this fragment was situated in the left upper section of a large altarpiece, representing possibly the Madonna and Saints, among them at the left side a Bishop. In order to get the proper view, this fragment should be inclined toward the right, so that the crosier comes into an almost vertical position.

This fragment chronologically precedes the Angels in the Vatican with which it shows unmistakable connections (also compare the shape of the sleeves). We shall have to assume the decade of 1460 to 1470 as the period of origin of the small panel. Further discussion of the fact that the latter obviously belongs to the circle of Mantegna, is superfluous. The manner of the foreshortening of the figure, and especially of the head, the facial type, the sleeve with the slit and the lacing, the rendering of the folds in the garment — all this is absolutely Mantegnesque.

The proof that Mantegna's influence had spread over Rome and Central Italy, is of momentous importance for the proper understanding of his position in the history of art.

Surprisingly enough, still two further pictures emerged lately, which, beyond doubt, have to be regarded as fragments of an altarpiece by Melozzo. These passed from an American private collection into the collection of Mr. S. Kress, and were presented by him to the National Gallery in Washington (Figs. 11 and 12). Each of these small panels ( $13\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{3}{4}$  inches) represents the half-figures of three angels holding musical instruments; they are turned toward a non-preserved central figure. Here too, the relation with Melozzo's frescoes in the Vatican is evident. Here too we find the identical, peculiar treatment of the halos. When compared with the fragment we mentioned above, it becomes evident that the groups of angels in Washington are of a little later origin. Under no conditions could they be regarded as belonging to the same altarpiece. In the Washington Angels a close stylistic connection with the Archangel Gabriel in the Uffizi Gallery can be observed. It is striking that two larger altarpieces of this artist had been cut up in older time, and that fragments of these both have been preserved.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Another fragment, representing a lute-playing angel, attributed to Melozzo da Forlì, was, years ago, in the Spiridon collection in Paris. But evidently it is not by his own hand but must be considered as the work of a younger painter under the influence of Melozzo.



## George Elbert Burr and the Western Landscape

The Case for the Post-Victorian Realists

By A. REYNOLDS MORSE

Cleveland, Ohio

GEORGE ELBERT BURR, the western landscape etcher who is represented by nearly a thousand prints in over two dozen museums, is relatively little known as a water colorist. And his some twenty-four early plates printed in color are still another side of his work which was largely overlooked, probably because of the supernal majesty of the subsequent western plates.<sup>1</sup> Then too, if we should treat with Burr as an artist of colors there would remain the absorbing and very current question as to what constitutes Art in the western landscape school, and why that Art has never "arrived" in the 57th Street sense of the word.

Burr was born in Monroe Falls, Ohio, on April 14, 1859; and after the usual vicissitudes of the determined young artist, moved to New York City, and around 1890 became a traveling staff artist for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*.<sup>2</sup> Later he was chosen to illustrate the catalogue section of Heber R. Bishop's vast treatise on jade,<sup>3</sup> and the large catalogue of Bishop's oriental bric-a-brac.<sup>4</sup> This task required nearly four years, during which time he made over a thousand intricate object drawings. From 1896 to 1900 the artist and his wife traveled in Europe, making numerous water-color sketches. After a brief stay in Tom's River, New Jersey, they moved to Denver, Colorado, around 1906, for the artist's health. Finally, and reluctantly, they moved again in 1924 to Phoenix, Arizona. There Burr died on November 17, 1939. His desert set of forty plates of the deep southwest was completed before he left Colorado,

<sup>1</sup>Burr made 383 listed plates. About 95 were of Colorado topics; 95 of Arizona, and 34 of New Mexico and California topics. About a dozen of the color plates were western scenes, all but two of these being laid in Colorado; the balance were of European topics. No complete list of his water colors is extant. All works here reproduced are in the collection of the author.

<sup>2</sup>Initialled drawings by Burr are found in *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* from Feb. 8, 1890 to Feb. 6, 1892. The author of this article has listed 29 of these drawings in the bibliography of his unpublished manuscript, "The Life and Works of George Elbert Burr."

<sup>3</sup>"Investigations and Studies in Jade," Pub. by Heber R. Bishop Estate, New York, 1906. Two Volumes. Burr's drawings are confined to Volume 11, the Catalogue Section. These books are about three by two feet, and nearly a foot thick, and one strains to lift a single volume. They are, however, a most beautiful example of fine bookmaking. The Bishop Jade Collection is now in the Metropolitan Museum.

<sup>4</sup>The Art Collection of Heber R. Bishop, American Art Galleries, New York, Deluxe Catalogue, 1906. Burr's drawings in this book are almost all initialled, unlike those in the book on jade, and yet no credit is given him.

and represented the high point of his artistic career. At least that he made this immortal contribution to the etcher's art is the one fact most widely known about him.

The technique of color etching is not a highly regarded form of the art.<sup>5</sup> The purist in particular feels that to tamper with the disciplined effect of the line and its contrasts is to weaken the total effect of the plate. Burr began his study of color etching a year or two before he moved west and perfected the process during his early years in Colorado. The process as he developed it, for he was self-taught, is essentially as follows: A soft ground or slightly roughened (aquatint) plate was prepared with some dry point or straight line etching. The cut or etched lines are sometimes employed to delineate colors, but they were not extensively so used by Burr. The soft ground or aquatint affords a surface capable of holding the oily printing medium which obviously would not adhere with much dimensional effect to the polished copper. After the plate was finished, a laborious process of wiping on the various colors was begun. The colors or "pigments in oil" were spread over the several portions of the plate, and a great deal of care had to be exercised to prevent them from running together. The plate was slightly warmed and printed by pressing on moist paper. The oil or medium had no affinity for the damp paper so that only the colors or pigments were transferred to the print. A plate was obviously capable of numerous interpretations, since each application of the colors could be used for only one printing. The technique of preparing and wiping on the colors was a slow and tedious one, and it is perhaps the wide variation in the effect possible using the single color plate that causes connoisseurs to look somewhat askance at it. After all it becomes impossible to judge the merit or perfection of the plate and the printing because the colors vary so untypically with each print pulled. The exponent of the process, however, would reply that the big feature of the color print is its uniqueness, for each print in no sense can be a mechanical duplicate of the other.

The chief complaint that could be lodged against the color plates is not that the same plate could be used to portray a morning or an evening scene by a mere change of the colors and the wiping, but that in spite of the presence of the colors, the tonality of the etching itself seems so little altered by an almost complete change in superficial color values that it might have been just as well to have omitted the colors altogether. The

<sup>5</sup>For example, one of the commentators on Burr, E. L. Allhusen, called color etching a bastard form of the art. (Reprint of Allhusen's articles from various issues of *The Studio*, issued in pamphlet form by Cyrus Boutwell of Denver, and F. H. Bresler Co. of Milwaukee, page 2.)

purist will rejoice to learn that Burr made a tacit admission of this fact by printing two or three of the later color plates in black or ordinary ink.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the main detractor of the plates in question is the rather arbitrary or laid-on, super-imposed effect of the color. It is as though one said this cloud and its vicinity is quite pink, that prairie completely a tawny yellow, and yonder pinion a solid, dark green. There is none of the imperceptible shading possible with multiple plate printing or water colors. While the tints Burr achieved are generally soft in effect and tone, hinting of color rather than stressing it, yet there remains the tendency to include just a little too much space in each color area which gives it an intensified, washed, or over-lapping appearance. This is doubly true of Burr, who, unlike Pescheret and others who have tried the method, did not always rely on the etched line to prevent the colors from spreading.<sup>7</sup>

The critical discussion which centers around color etching would lead one to deduce that it is regarded merely as a whimsical effort on the part of the etcher to achieve an impression, and perhaps an oversimplification of color without the actual use of compound tints. The limitations of the process are numerous, and the limitations on the artist topic-wise are perhaps even greater. But the West lent itself to Burr's tinting process somewhat better than some of the foreign topics he pictured by it. Only at evening when the sharp western light is momentarily softened, and the long-shadowed air intensifies and blends all color into one intimate hour, or again at sunrise when the eager, fresh light of the early sun gilds the mountains, can one derive a general, uniform tonal effect from a western landscape without including a wide range of colors. Maybe that is why so many of the artist's color plates show scenes at twilight or dawn. But, of course, he could not catch the accentuating shadows which lend the nostalgia to the evening and briskness to the morning hours, and for that reason the black and white would probably have been more effective.

Burr, being full of Victorian disciplines, believed in technical perfection, and he devoted a great deal of care to his color plates. They were in a sense a transition from his almost exclusive pre-occupation with water colors to pure etching. The whereabouts of the now unique color prints he made are not really known. They have long ago disappeared into private collections and western homes, and it would be virtually impossible

<sup>6</sup>For example, *The Desert, Arizona*, (No. 262) and *Arizona Clouds* (No. 68). The latter plate, Burr's only mezzotint, was in fact reworked to become No. 184, a desert set plate bearing the same title.

<sup>7</sup>Leon R. Pescheret has an excellent article on color etching in *Arizona Highways*, October, 1944, pp. 16-25, where several of his own color plates are reproduced.



FIG. 1. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: COMO FROM VARENNA (water color)



to assemble a set of them now. Their rarity and value belie their critics.<sup>8</sup>

George Elbert Burr seems to have always had a flare for water color. His earliest works made before and during his two years with *Leslie's Weekly* were in many instances wash drawings. During his wander years on the continent and in England he was mainly preoccupied with recording artistic notes in the form of water-color sketches which he intended to render into finished pictures later. Such an uncompleted sketch is illustrated in Figure 1. (*Como from Varenna*, 10½ x 14½, dated May 31, 1898.) In fact around 1904 he felt that his crowded notebooks of this earlier period held a life's work, and that he was destined to become a water-color artist known for his Turner-esque renditions of European scenes.<sup>9</sup> When he moved west he began to forsake the transcribing of his bulging notebooks and to look around for topics in the vigorous western countryside. While he was gradually turning from color etching to pure etching, he produced numbers of water colors of scenes in rural Colorado. He found the Colorado winters severe, and often wintered in California, and while there did many water colors of the always brilliant Pacific Coast gardens.<sup>10</sup> Later, in Arizona, he made a group of desert pastels which showed a real feeling for, and a mastery of the technique, as well as making numerous water colors of desert clouds and trees.<sup>11</sup> Figure 2 pictures an untitled desert pastel of butte and cloud, and shows the delicacy which typified so many of these works.

The painter's sensitive eye always caught the true color of a landscape, and, as in his color etchings, he most often portrayed the scene at dawn or dusk when the extreme western color contrasts are not so overpower-

<sup>8</sup>Probably the only existing complete set of Burr's color plates was found in Mrs. Burr's collection which is preserved in the Bimson Collection, Phoenix. Only two or three are found in the New York Public Library's large collection, and in two or three other museums.

<sup>9</sup>On the early morning of the artist's passing, Mrs. Burr went to the studio and burned bundle after bundle of water colors, sketches, note books and drawings, before friends could stop her. For several years prior to his death, the artist had sorted his works, destroying all that he felt unworthy. As a result the things Mrs. Burr burned in her grief were irreplaceable. Only one or two of the sketch books were saved. She was partly motivated in her action by their joint obsession that some unscrupulous dealer might "corner" the remaining Burriana, "boom" the etcher with a biography, and cash in by selling works which they felt held largely personal memories, and should go to close friends. Had they lived they would no doubt have advanced as examples of this the cases of Eilshemius and Winslow Homer.

<sup>10</sup>The only known reproduction of one of these water colors is found in *The Denver Post* for Monday, January 11, 1909, p. 7, *A Santa Barbara Garden*. While Burr estimates he did over a thousand water colors and some fifty oils, a careful search cannot discover where any of his water colors were ever reproduced in available form before.

<sup>11</sup>The only known reproduction of one of these pastels is found in *The Arizona Woman*, Jan. 1932, (Vol. 111, No. 6) where *The Enchanted Mesa* is reproduced on the cover in color. On June 14, 1925, Burr wrote to his friend and dealer, Cyrus Boutwell of Denver apropos of the pastels: "Yes, I have gone to a hot place alright, but I did not have to die to get there as some do! If I do a water color now, I will only do as much or as little as I think will give me pleasure. I did that in the pastels, and enjoyed them." He made around a hundred of the pastels, although no list is found, and many are untitled like the one reproduced here.



FIG. 2. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: ARIZONA DESERT (pastel)

ing. The night shadows were laid on over an infinite detail so that the effect of many of his works is that of stepping from a fireside out into the starlight: a little time is necessary before the eye becomes accustomed to the darkness, and one can see the minutiae of the night.

As a meticulous technician, he was so concerned with securing just the right tone in his water colors that he habitually made them one-fifth more brilliant to allow for the darkening caused by the almost invisible tint in the glass used in framing.<sup>12</sup> He also made long sunlight exposure tests of his pastels which were incorporated in wax mediums to make absolutely sure that the colors would be permanent.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of his realism, Burr often gave a slight angularity to many of the hills, trees, and stones in his water colors. This curious structure or

<sup>12</sup>In a letter dated Nov. 26, 1927 he wrote to dealer Boutwell regarding some water colors. "... they are painted for glass—that is 20% stronger in warmth than if to be seen without the reduction produced by modern glass. I used to fail in this sometimes, but don't any more, I hope."

<sup>13</sup>On March 8, 1925, he wrote to Boutwell: "As to permanence, will say I tested these colors when I made a series fifteen years ago, and I find them, the particular colors I use, OK. Since coming here I have tested for 60 days in the direct Arizona sun, the tints I use. There has been absolutely no change. There are many tints that are fugitive, but I don't use them in water color or pastel. These have a little wax mixed in with the color to hold the color, and that makes for permanence."



FIG. 3. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: EVENING NEAR KREMMLING, COLORADO (water color)

style is a feature not generally found in his drawings or etchings. *Evening near Kremmling* (in Western Colorado), Figure 3, shows this trait in the scarcely visible foreground detail, and in the pine forests. Here too, as in many of his works, he made use of the line structure of the paper itself to carry the more subtle gradations in color, passing over the paper with a very light touch of his brush so as to catch only the almost invisible ridging pressed into the paper by its maker. By this means he caught the transient shadings of the evening sky where only a remnant or two of cloud from the afternoon shower still remains.

In general, however, he was an experimentalist only with his palette, not with his subject or style, although he did explore a pointillistic technique in an attempt to include all the colors of the western deserts in certain works. He had a tendency to dramatize the western scene, but only by his choice of the hour at which he portrayed it. The ominous cloud, the pending storm, the lowering twilight, the garish dawn, always intrigued him. This sensationalism, however, was always subdued, and on the whole is not obtrusive. His eye for composition had a sameness which many people feel detracts from his topics by lessening their surprise, for he most often combined a tree and a superb accentuated cloud.

But Burr was a naturalist as well as an artist, unlike most modern artists who seldom take the trouble or time to learn the intimacies of their subject, and who seem to lack the technical equipment or patient craftsmanship to portray it accurately if they do know it well. He was not in the same hurry as the modern artist to cash in on his art, and was more nearly content to wait for his art to prove itself.<sup>14</sup>

It is most instructive for the novice as well as the connoisseur to compare how a master of line transcribes from one medium to another. For that reason, two illustrations for this article are selected to show similar scenes in pencil, and again in water color. Figure 4 shows a pencil sketch (14½ x 20) made on June 14, 1910, of summer clouds rising over the Colorado plains, seen from the vantage point of the artist's little foothills cabin overlooking the endless prairies where they run abruptly into the mountains. And Figure 5 pictures the same view, done in water color in the same year, but slightly more compressed (10 x 14⅜). There

<sup>14</sup>On April 9, 1931, to Boutwell: "A California 'artist' came in yesterday, showed me his etchings. And they were pitiful. Just about what I did when I was 18 years old, and yet he does not realize that they should not be shown even to his friends. Poor fellow! Why don't they learn their trade before they try to make money!"



FIG. 4. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: CLOUDS OVER COLORADO PLAINS (pencil sketch)



is an intimacy and a quiet charm about such unspectacular scenes which call for a simple realism. They are not well enough known to be pictured by a more modern style of painting. Cube or abstract them and the painting no longer has the fragile essence of the beauty of the Colorado foothills where the prairies suddenly turn up their edges against the mountains.

One sometimes gets the impression that Burr's water colors never achieved a widespread renown of their own because they nearly all ultimately became mere studies or precursors for relatively famous etchings, in many cases produced years afterwards. Now it is true that he often worked from water colors made on the spot, and many of the topics of the water colors were made into etchings later.<sup>15</sup> It is also true that the contemporary critics seldom did more in commenting on his works than to remark that he also worked in water color.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the western water colors were never widely publicized, nor did they have to be for it seems

<sup>15</sup>For example, *Storm Near Timberline*, *Desert Shower*, and *Sentinel Pine*. The latter is in the Denver Club Collection. Each of these water colors, and many others were followed by an etching showing a definite cousinship.

<sup>16</sup>For example: *American Magazine of Art*, February, 1919, George Elbert Burr by Theo Merrill Fisher, p. 125; or *International Studio*, November 1914, The Etchings of George Elbert Burr by Morris R. Ward, p. XI: "Though his artistic career first commenced in the field of water colour in which he proved himself a competent and charming artist, Mr. Burr had always been strongly attracted to etching . . ."



FIG. 5. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: CLOUDS OVER COLORADO PLAINS (water color)

that enthusiastic early collectors of his things soon took them off the market. As a result of these pictures never receiving publicity before or after going into private homes the cynic might inquire if there can be any immortality for an artist who is in danger of being forgotten because his work is not in circulation or in the news. The critics indeed are all too likely to forget a man like Burr who never indulged in any real sensationalism, and whose memory is kept alive only in scattered homes, largely in the West, where the majority of his works can be found. The western nouveaux riches never went for Western Art on a big scale, but they did prove easy prey to the peddler of expensive pseudo-Italian and English landscapes in the great gilt frames of the period. Burr's water colors were on the other hand moderately priced and went into more average homes where they are not so likely to be soon on the market again. Unlike the large estates, the one or two prints or water colors in a small home are much less likely to turn up at an auction than the more numerous and impersonal acquisitions of families who become "estates."

Like Burr's color prints, the water colors have somehow gone out of circulation from an active or commercial point of view. Do these all but unknown works remain a cumulative tribute to the artist? Can they be regarded as part of the long catalogue of art if one seldom if ever sees them, if they are not part of public collections?

Such imponderable questions may well lead us to the problem of the artistic standing of the western landscape. A great many erudite devotees of Art would no longer include under that heading a realistic study or composition of prairie and cloud as illustrated here for example in Figure 5, because it is too straight-forward, too commonplace, too photographic. Part of the issue seems to hinge around just where in the scale of the decorative arts western landscape art begins. This depends of course by what set of values and also by what generation it is being judged. Of the arty-crafty people whom one knows, there are many who might say that most conscientious western artists are tawdry and repetitive, and that while a western landscape may be decorative or even dramatic in a straight pictorial sense, it still is not Art in the long term meaning of the word. This is because Art is more and more coming to imply some deformation of fact, some imposition on the artistic license, and some vagary or malformation of technique; or else some well varnished antiquity. There is perhaps a growing good reason for advocating such an arbitrary distinction between a picture landscape and Art because of the current tendency for department stores to advertise "Genuine oil paintings for the home, only \$69.50,"

which are pictorial representations of landscapes conceded by modern critics, like Burr's water colors, to be charming enough but not Art. But still there remains something about the West and its scenery: the Rockies, the deserts, the prairies and the mesa country which cries out for a faithful reproduction without distortion.

The western landscape requires a consummate technique if it is ever to achieve fame. This requirement is imposed more stringently now than ever before because photography is gaining a definitely artistic standing of its own which may prove better suited to deal with western topics than the artist. It may also be said that the broad, glaring countryside of Arizona and Colorado are fundamentally not landscape topics in themselves. Furthermore the clarity of the air, and the extreme range of color values present bring technical problems to the artist totally different from those of the East where the air is soft and heavy.<sup>17</sup> The light intensity itself between East and West as registered on the impersonal light meter proves indisputably that this difference is not merely rhetorical. The modern artist who is not able to catch all the sharp and manifold colors of the West, therefore selects one or two, and accents them, throwing the balance of the values entirely out of proportion. He endeavors to justify himself by saying that he is trying to get the "feeling" of the scene, as he cannot capture the tone of it because of the limited range of his medium. Since the topic itself is not one whose intense and numerous values will always lend themselves to compressing and reducing to picture size, the result is the fiasco that is the modern western landscape. The tone of the western landscape is ineradicably tied up with the true feeling or mood of it, and unless the artist can catch the extreme color ranges which distinguish the West from the East he is sacrificing the one salient feature which could characterize and possibly immortalize his work, in favor of a generalized feeling which might come from any other landscape where the values are narrower and more readily caught and translated. Only by a stylistically real tonalism can the western countryside be portrayed and achieve a full artistic stature of its own.

The Santa Fe School, which is largely social, and the numerous artists who come to the resorts and paint sensational views of the Grand Canyon and the gaudy, glamourized Indian, are probably responsible for helping

<sup>17</sup>Edmund R. Wilson in "A Reporter at Large," *New Yorker*, June 2, 1945, p. 44, has expressed the epitome of the opposite of the visual conditions found in the West: "The moist air which softens form and deepens color gives all these (London) parks a special charm, as one sees them under pearly clouds in the pale blue sky of an early spring evening, or, later, fringed with purple lilacs and studded with white blossoming chestnut above turf that is soft and dense like the air."

to set the current cynical low value on the classical artist of the West. Burr did not seek the most flamboyant topic as a rule, and he never outraged the properties of Nature with profane transfigurations. He was a faithful and a patient student of the evasive and delicate colors of peak and prairie, both in Colorado and Arizona. And as such he has been slyly deprecated by nearly all the lesser craftsmen with their fashionable and often dogmatic patrons who came after him, and who have tended to substitute one or two aspects of a scene for a true picture of it. The water colorist was never "arty" in the modern sense. He could not brook an impression and all the queer antics, daubings and posturings this implied.<sup>18</sup> Many of the modern almost gross portrayals of western landscapes indeed do look like hasty studies where the impasto is the result of continuous accident, not purpose, because this tendency toward impressionism, and translation into terms of the personality exists. And Burr, who himself underwent a long, self-imposed apprenticeship, and who had a Dickensian idea about the need for self-negation, study and training, would never admit that anything but a straight-forward picture carefully worked over, was art. In his quaint way he was as hostile toward the modern spontaneous point of view as its exponents are toward him. The western landscapist of today all too likely flies west and remains a few weeks in costume and in season in some stylish resort center, and then returns to his eastern studio with a "complete understanding" of desert and mountains. Possibly this can be done in Europe, or even in New England, but not in the uncivilized stretches of the West without missing the elusive spirit of these places which for all its intensity is not really as obvious as that of Venice or Vermont. This is primarily because the essential brilliance of Nature herself is involved, and not man's mutations worked upon her which alone can cause her to be subject to innumerable interpretations.

Many of the early surveys, in the days before the camera, carried along staff artists who made "views" as directed by the geologists, topographers and their own inclinations. Some of these landscape studies were then transcribed by studio artists into etchings or lithographs, and some were reproduced directly in the surveys, guidebooks, and histories of the West.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>To Boutwell in Denver, he wrote on Nov. 22, 1935: "I enclose a reproduction and what a 'critic' says about an artist that I hear Denver rates as a greater painter (Ernest Fiene). Well I am not impressed. Had he called it a study of rocks, or Niagara Falls, I might have accepted it, but to label it '*Cheyenne Pass*' is too much for my poor brain. Now I know this man can paint if he wishes to, but this pose for notoriety by being 'different,' and giving us a 'new art' is simply 'ringing the bell' to attract attention. It's all blah to me."

<sup>19</sup>For example: "Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and its Tributaries," Report of J. W. Powell, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1875; or "Second Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey," by J. W. Powell, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1882, especially pp. 49-200 on the Grand Canyon District and Lake Bonneville.



One of the charges which is made against prosaic western scenes such as are illustrated here is patently that they are merely "illustrative," and do not come under the heading of "art." Figures 6, 7, and 8 show The Needles Mountains on the Colorado River in Southern Arizona. The first view is a lithograph made by a studio artist from a field sketch, and is taken from an early report on the Colorado River.<sup>20</sup> Figure 7 is a pencil sketch of the same general scene made by Burr on March 23, 1908; and Figure 8 is the renowned drypoint etching he made from the sketch some



FIG. 6. STUDIO OF GEORGE ELBERT BURR: THE NEEDLES MOUNTAINS (lithograph)

years later.<sup>21</sup> But these comparative pictures can only partially show the touches of feeling, composition, tone, and romantic license which raise Burr's works above the merely illustrative class. Again he has been charged with being "too photographic," as though that showed a lack of artistry! Indeed the implications of such a comment are that art has moved beyond realism, and that some people no longer see anything artistic in the world as it is, but only as they like to imagine it.

<sup>20</sup>Plate II, opposite p. 30 of "Geological Report," in Report upon the Colorado River of the West, Lt. Joseph C. Ives, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1861.

<sup>21</sup>*Needles Mountains, Colorado River, Arizona*, No. 211, Drypoint, 9½ x 12 inches, Number 21 of The Desert Set. Prints in ten museums. Incidentally Figures 6 and 8 of this article are the only ones hitherto reproduced anywhere.



FIG. 7. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: THE NEEDLES MOUNTAINS (pencil sketch)

But there is bound to be a reaction to the modern abstract style which has become standardized in art schools in favor of a finished and patient artistry. Nor is the former post-Victorian craftsmanship found in the department store landscape. The heart of the matter is that each generation eschews the works of art of the preceding one, only to have the third generation rediscover the works of their grandparents' time. This observation has been borne out by the recent rediscovery of The Hudson River School which had been gradually relegated to the museum basement until shrewd New York merchandisers suddenly were able to revive it.<sup>22</sup> Now, today, many art lovers cannot appreciate the uncomplicated Post-Victorian landscapes of Burr. It might be said that there is almost a Freudian aspect to this attempt of each generation to annihilate the works of their fathers (and so indirectly their fathers in the flesh, we are told). This larger trait has been augmented in this instance by the change in sentiment from the Victorian kiss mama idea to a kill papa one, as has been applied to certain recent trends in modern art.<sup>23</sup> Each generation turns from the art of the preceding one in much the same fashion that the present schools of western art have turned from the traditional one of the Georgian realists. This paling of our father's surprises is a common cause of temporary misjudgment as to the ultimate value of certain art periods and pieces. A catholic taste in art necessary to achieve a true perspective from the present backward, is not concurrent with present wholesale methods of teach-

<sup>22</sup>See "Romantic Flow of the Hudson," *Art News*, March 1-14, 1945, pp. 10-12; "Hudson School at the Whitney," *Art Digest*, May 1, 1945; Macbeth and Harry Shaw Newman Gallery shows of Early 19th Century Americans, *Art Digest*, March 15, 1945, p. 15.

<sup>23</sup>See *Key to Modern Painting* by Charles Marriott, London, 1938, where this idea is developed in connection with early manifestations of surrealism.



FIG. 8. GEORGE ELBERT BURR: THE NEEDLES MOUNTAINS (drypoint etching)

ing and merchandising art, and the limited and often intolerant approach taken by some sheltered academicians. And yet acquiring a cosmopolitan taste or tolerance is the only way of avoiding the danger of short term misjudgments based on the kill papa sentiment. But the method of getting this tolerance is unfortunately not being taught in schools where there is a noticeable ingrowing, a noticeable departure from reality, probably due to the increasing number of students who cannot face life and who therefore become teachers too soon after graduation. This fact partially accounts for some of the mutations through which the western landscape is going. Life itself however does have a way of giving this understanding to us and that is through our children, but only if we can bring ourselves to see with the fresh and growing wisdom of their eyes.

Can a faithful landscape admit the touch of the painter's personality? This seems to be one of the basic questions that worry the modern artists who search for distinctiveness in their florid, summary impressions of mountain and plain. Is there a personality in Burr's water colors? Many modern critics would say no, he painted "just another picture." But a

limited number of true westerners can sense a great deal of difference between his works and those of say, Charles Partridge Adams, whose "Autumn Silhouettes" of the cottonwoods and the mountains near Denver is reproduced here in Figure 9. Each of the early artists evolved a distinctive tone, and clung doggedly to it. Tone was more important than style in the period of these water colors, because it was through tonal craftsmanship that the various subtle nuances and color surprises of the West were able to be transmitted without distortion, and therein lay the artist's assurance of personal distinction. But by and large the minor western realists never found favor with the influential art patrons of the day, most of whom were but recently arrived from the East, for if they had any time for art at all in the momentum of the times, it was to glance at the advertisements of the new country painted by the railroad artists like Albert Bierstadt, Harvey Young, and even Thomas Moran. But Burr and Adams and the rest of the post-Victorians clung to their tonal interpretations, and remained true to a simple and naturalistic tradition, refusing to give in to transitory influences and opinions, or the effects of art movements in remote centers. That they worked in such relative isolation may account for the almost complete lack of information about them.

It is an anomaly that when one talks of Art in the West to a westerner the topic implied is not the art which the West has produced but the art which has been brought into the West, the bric-a-brac and heavy mediocre oils from Paris, London and New York. Art in Denver, or Art in Phoenix is not the art of the city, but the art of remote urban centers imported often for merely social purposes into new and sometime incongruous surroundings.<sup>24</sup>

Western landscape art is just about one step ahead of the dole. It is an anemic, rachitic infant with no real vigor, but this may perhaps be because no really shrewd merchandiser has yet taken it up. There are really no definitive schools of western scenic art, for the good individual artists here and there do not even begin to temper the field with incipient tendencies or directions, and no really strong, affirmative or dogmatic personalities are appearing.<sup>25</sup> What good painters the West produces often gravitate toward the better money of eastern art centers, and then tend to paint

<sup>24</sup>When compiling a definitive bibliography on Burr, the writer came on a book called *Art in Denver*. "Here at last," he thought with anticipation, "is the story of the pioneer artists of the city!" It proved to be a catalogue of the imports of wealthy citizens! (*Art in Denver, The Lookout, From Denver Public Library*, January, 1928.)

<sup>25</sup>The writer would include here Hurd and O'Keefe as well as Fiene, Kirkland, Delano, Haines, and others. Some moderns are getting nearer to the true tones, however, and realism seems slowly gaining a foothold again.





FIG. 9. CHARLES PARTRIDGE ADAMS: AUTUMN SILHOUETTES (water color)

more familiar scenes with narrower color value ranges which have a broader market.

To a certain extent the fate of the western landscape is tied up with the development of small town society with all its whims and feuds. The West being still very young in certain cultural and social ways does not yet have a well-based feeling for art, except in the terms of the faddist which provides talk. The West looks to New York and its leadership primarily because the relatively small western population centers do not furnish the necessary safe margin of altruistic and adventurous purchasing power needed to support worthwhile experimental artists until they "arrive." Art in stepping westward has skipped the great open spaces, and planted its other foot on the West Coast. In between there remains the phenomena of little groups of arty people marooned on the social or cultural fringes of the smaller cities who are sincerely striving to achieve a tolerant artistic adulthood, but who have not yet fully realized that the West does not lend itself and its vitally colorful spaces to the impressionistic interpretations which they are being led to feel is "up-to-date" and synonymous with all that "art" implies in the small town.

Until the prairies, mountains, and deserts become intimate and antique with the effects of civilization they cannot but lose when they are por-

trayed in the "modern" manner, and shaped to fit the imposed dictates of some "foreign" school. Abstractions of western landscapes do not seem to have the appeal of the studio conception where the artist is not so distracted by the numerous extraneous values he cannot render. With so many people painting professionally it seems that only those who can perfect an unparalleled realism like Burr's can hope to achieve the same success as he did with the western landscape, for it really does not make "an art of the west" to take some current stylistic tangent brought West by today's swift communications, and impose it upon remote mesas and prairies. This type of mundane plagiaristic travesty not only shows a fundamental lack of faith and confidence on the painter's part, but betrays an uneasiness with his subject, as well as too much of a conscious attempt to permit the influence of Donati, Feininger, Soutine or some other expressionistic or technical innovators.

And finally, in the search for manifold meanings, the modern students and collectors who pride themselves on their ability to analyze and read meanings into pictures are not likely to be content with realistic renderings of western landscapes. Such works can only have one fundamental feeling or mood, whereas a more general, imaginative, or lived-over subject is capable of infinite variations. But when one is not content with the world as one finds it, and must alter great segments of it in the name of art, then the lift and power of reality become lost, and neurotic stimulants must then supply the artistic values which Nature is no longer allowed to provide.

George Elbert Burr never turned Nature inside out to see her soul. His pictures, factual, intimate, and colorful, provide a loyal record of the West to anyone who has known and loved it well. It would be unfair to reject or to assign to oblivion Burr's water colors, color etchings and pastels without first having become as inordinately fond of the West as he was; as one should be before trying to understand how Art must still be liberalized to include the neglected western landscapes of the Post-Victorian Period.

## A Parallel of American Styles

By JOHN FABIAN KIENITZ  
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THIS paper is an attempt to establish a few stylistic parallels in the colonial painting, architecture, and furniture dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century. It will also be concerned with finding the parallelism that exists in these three arts during the days of the second Georgian period, datable roughly from 1740 to 1760.

We are well aware that what charms us in the art forms of the earlier expression is their direct, homespun, medieval, and rustic simplicity. The seventeenth century is for us an age of pewter and wood. We know, too, that before eighteenth-century style our pleasure is derived from forms in which a new technique and aim operate to bring about an overt equation of the decorative with constructive which is like an idealization of the raw materials of the artist.

When it is a question of the earlier painting, then, few pictures out of our beginnings are as impressive as the portrait of *Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Baby Mary* (Fig. 1). This painting dating from 1670 is the work of an anonymous limner. It is obviously the creation of an artist who is perfect within the limitations of the style he practices. Its surface is an exquisite simplification of the subject and the means. It is a primary textural unit, like the once-brilliant pattern that sinks into the fabric of a tapestry, like the soft tonal progressions in an ancient mural. Its minimal tones and drawing make it a singularly successful, decorative reduction of the complexities of life to the simplicities of art. In this portrait, material flesh and costume are scaled down to a patterned consistency in which life's mobile richness ceases to act and an inorganic sameness prevails in a kind of magic stillness. So the design is gravity-stricken, impersonal as a peasant weave. We are forced to read life and action into it.

Comparable medieval integrity of outlook on a prepared surface and a like unwillingness or inability to create with salient, plastic accentuations are to be seen in that most ponderous and opaquely-solid of furniture conventions, the wainscot chair (Fig. 2). The "Elder Brewster" chair in the Metropolitan Museum's American Wing dates from around 1650. This oak boarding is embellished with planar, inorganically compartmentalized carving on the chair back from cresting to seat. The other parts of this "composition" are left to their routine, practical devices except for the arms which have been cut to a crude, ugly curve alien to the decorative



FIG. 1. MRS. FREAKE AND BABY MARY. BY ANONYMOUS LIMNER, 1670  
*Worcester Art Museum*

refinements on the chair back. The decoration is as rigid and unyielding as the surface board on which it is cut. The cutting of the conventionalized design tends to uniformity throughout so that all parts of the chair back register visually as of equal significance.

The parlor of the 1684 *John Ward House* on the grounds of the Essex Institute in Salem is born of craftsmanship that enjoys an equalization of units, working with one thing at a time, incapable of three-dimensional integrations, of a lifelike plastic whole (Fig. 3). Here the distance that



separates nature from art is not far. The sense of both is strong. And the balance is in favor of the natural materials with which the craftsman worked. Here the primitive, opaque, rugged texture of wood prevails. It is to be found in the random-width pine of the flooring, the unobtrusive vertical sheathing of pine wall, the persistent reassurance as structure of inert beams and joists. This domestic harmony of simples schools us to admire the *anticipated* character of wood forms whose natural condition as living trees is not far removed from the look of the simplified finished



FIG. 2. "ELDER BREWSTER" WAINSCOT CHAIR (c. 1650)  
*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*



FIG. 3. JOHN WARD HOUSE: PARLOR (1684)  
*Salem, Massachusetts*

product. In the succeeding century we have to admire *unanticipated* beauty in wood that has lost all connection with its primitive state.

The formal organization of this mother and child, the wainscot chair, and the medieval house is a calculated, not at all accidental, conversion of the organic into the static, a process that simplifies life's interpenetrating complexities into the satisfactions of untroubled rest. All surfaces are treated in an elementary numerical sequence with impeccable clarity as their reward. Such art expression is archaic, provincial, peasant-like in the pride its makers take in granting to each part of the composition its informal identification in a static field. Wherever decoration is added to substance it is locked to a fundamentally unchanged structural mass or surface, as in the chamfer of the beam, the moulded end-strip in sheathing, the corbel-like widening of the corner posts. It never disturbs or enlivens the passive equalities of the sound construction.

In seventeenth-century painting all color is tonal. It is an adulteration of the full color range. Tones of flesh and costume are kept in rubrics of

inaction on a surface and there is no organic interplay or transition from part to part. The mother and child are not artistic equivalents of the living. They remind us of the truth in Miss Rebecca West's insight when she declares that "the likeness of men lies on the surface and their uniqueness in their depths." In primitive art, a Rembrandt or a Copley is impossible. This superficial sameness so common in our earlier painting reduces the people portrayed to so many parallels with dolls incapable of anything but galvanic action. With Copley in the second period of Georgian the portrait subject lives as strongly in art as he does in life and his decorative environment is as organically a part of him on canvas as in life. Pewter lacks luster and Copley's silver age brings life up to hard, metallic polish.

The years around 1750 bring into being a style-culture elevated to aristocratic deportment. Mahogany and walnut are elegant substitutes for pine and oak. In architecture the period imports the baroque, energetic masses and aggressive integrations of Andrea Palladio. Architectural latinism writes out codifications for stone, brick, and wood like those in that dignified pile, *Mount Pleasant*, built in 1761 for Captain John Macpherson (Fig. 4).



FIG. 4. MOUNT PLEASANT: EXTERIOR (1761)  
*Fairmount Park, Philadelphia*

For harmonious connection with its robust discipline and its wholesale recreation of the materials of the artist, this house calls for formal reorganization of the environment. In the seventeenth century a house was naturally approached along a curving, line-of-least-resistance footpath with nature growing to the threshold unchanged. At *Mount Pleasant* the approach is artificially and extensively neat, ordered for a single axis with no room for deviation. The Georgian house reflects aristocratic ease in handling more complex relations of life and form. A richer life in polished control is peculiarly the genius of the eighteenth century.

Now the materials of construction, wood, brick and local stone, as well as imported marble, sacrifice something of their natural condition as they rise to take their prepared place on a surface and in depth. Wood now suffers or glories, as you will, in its neutralization through surface paint and spatial geometry. It reaches new life in a plastic wealth of shrewdly-defined space. Brick substance is boldly projected in geometric blocks the scaled relation of which is constant for the other, and larger or smaller energies of a structure that is sedately captive to a ritual of calculation. In this dispensation there is no room for informal activities, for that nonchalant deportment which in the earlier art leads us to believe that the seventeenth-century craftsman delighted, as artist, in keeping his expression down to a primer of essentials, to an abatement of the myriad pressures of life and nature. In the Georgian house everything is drawn and activated larger than life.

Neither the *John Ward House* nor the Parson Capen house in nearby Topsfield prepare us especially, as exteriors, for the internal, surprisingly even distribution to each side from the central entry, of the parlor and the kitchen-hall. This two-room arrangement is the colonist's heritage from house forms in medieval England consisting of hall-bower and stable or hall and bower. It is an arrangement that is accepted as common sense, as a program for life instead of art.

At *Mount Pleasant* and in Palladian Georgian generally exterior integrations are always an earnest of an interior balance that flatters the senses. In the medieval homes of the colonists doorways were an expression of effective entrances and defensive barriers. As artistic presentation they are mute. The east and west front entrances at *Mount Pleasant* live as strongly for decoration as they do for use. The framing of these doors raises white-painted wood to eloquence in a continental, fastidious speech as vivid as the pavilioned central facade, the brick string-course and the brick blocks of quoining. The surface of this house has been enlivened into depth.



In the stair hall, shifted to the side so that the main hall may become pure space, the elegantly moulded mahogany handrail is delicately shaped to give untroubled grip to the hand. Its long flight is concluded in the energetic structural curve of the goose-neck that rises gracefully to the newel at just the right height so that the hand gripping the rail always meets, so to speak, a polite reception in space. In the humbler stair constructions of the seventeenth-century there is no such protective accompaniment in depth. The relationship between riser and tread is so poorly thought out in the earlier homes that progress upward is ungainly and irregular and coming down must be done with caution. In the Georgian house the relationship is ideal for leisurely and even progress up and down. Both ways of working out a stair are eminently "functional" let there be no mistake about that. We must ask for what and how they function.

In an earlier house in the Philadelphia area, in the 1723 home of Governor Keith, his Graeme Park at Horsham, an oak handrail is moulded with comparable regard for our grasp. But the flight of this handrail isn't winged. It has but a short carry. As a stiff, steep diagonal it hits the landing newel with awkward abruptness. It has life without art while the seventeenth-century staircase detail never moves at all. It is simply an inert attachment, an object in routine use. At *Mount Pleasant* we have a plastic coordination of handrail, balusters, stair-width, tread, riser, and stair wainscot. In the seventeenth-century house no provisions are made for exceptional reception of the eye. The eye viewing *Mount Pleasant* apprehends an ideal performance.

In this Georgian house, in the upper hall, false doors are introduced to make even more explicit the application here of an artistic vision which holds nature to be formless and art a bringer of the law. The Palladian window lighting the upper hall converts what was earlier an inanimate wall into a living picture of geometricized tact. While losing nothing of its function as a serviceable source of light this window asserts itself as visual splendor. The second Georgian period represented here has, as a style, its cake and eats it too. Such detail isn't dormant. It isn't, as some admirers of less-ambitious construction would have us believe, an academic denial of what is most natural to man. It lives and it lives the life of art. For a wealthy, cultivated society this Palladian flourish is as necessary, as sturdy, attractive, and as just as were the unredeemed forms of the more restricted seventeenth century.

*Mount Pleasant's* coalescent space and surface, its organic fusion of

straight with curved line and mass in structural rhythm bring to mind a like collaboration of complexities in the American Chippendale produced by Thomas Affleck (active 1763-1795). In the Karolik collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts there is a Chippendale armchair which is stylistically contemporary with *Mount Pleasant* (Fig. 5). In this chair classically decorative carving acts organically with the structural foundation curves to which it comes as naturally as skin to bone. Such design calls up Copley's synthesis of portrait elements in a compact space.

In Affleck's chair, dating from the period 1760-1775, the style marks of its age are particularly noticeable in the muscularly living clutch of the claw over the ball of the cabriole leg. Such plastic sense of life (see Fig. 6) was impossible to Elizabethan or Jacobean furniture with their



FIG. 5. CHIPPENDALE-STYLE ARMCHAIR  
BY THOMAS AFFLECK, c. 1760-75  
*Karolik Collection*  
*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*



FIG. 6. DETAIL OF LEG OF CHIPPENDALE-  
STYLE CHEST OF DRAWERS, c. 1765  
*Karolik Collection*  
*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

inert, straight-line, right-angled joinings. It is only rarely to be seen, and then but slightly and in less emphatic union, in the preceding Queen Anne style.

Because of its suggestive, tactile, physical power this Chippendale ball-and-claw is like a prevision of nineteenth-century furniture practice which will see *misplaced naturalism* make over wood and metal into beasts of prey. The wood that Affleck fits and carves keeps in art the life of wood which in seventeenth-century construction was read down to a passive state. The oak of the wainscot chair is immobilized. It is spelled out in a narrow grammar of assent. Affleck's mahogany is energy controlled. It is a bold projection, an animation in keeping with art's rules of life. In the Chippendale armchair the maker's creative enthusiasms are manifest and his expression isn't stifled by its adherence to a classical code. This chair has the "look" of the staircase at *Mount Pleasant*; it is natural for polite rest as that staircase, with its slight riser and broad-surfaced tread, was a proper accompaniment for decorous motion.

There are many Copley portraits far superior in physical beauty to his *Colonel Jeremiah Lee* (Fig. 7). Few among them, however, have the engaging, strictly local and American appeal of this Marblehead merchant-trader. In this instance the physical appearance of this provincial grandee, though formally posed, still keeps in art a large measure of the pudgy bulk it carried through its patriotic life. In this early Copley the subject and the attendant pictorial apparatus lack the scrupulous finesse of Copley's later style. Nevertheless this prosaic exposition of the living man is as large and accommodating as the contemporary wing chair must have been.

Colonel Lee stands before us in attractive pathos, in the rudiments of dignity, in a baroque opulence as expansive and expensive as the interior decoration of his time. Affleck's purities of mahogany integration are like the unified pictorial vitalities in the maturer, one might say, the politer Copleys. So too the handling of Palladian detail at *Mount Pleasant* is more sophisticated than the Copley statement in behalf of Colonel Lee.

Implicit in the *Colonel Jeremiah Lee*, however, are the great qualities of classic prudence with which the later Copley was to prove himself at home. In the Lee portrait there is gravity, objectivity, as well as sympathetic understanding of the human imperfections of the subject. This portrait begins to follow the Georgian creed. In this creed we find a stress on thoroughgoing amelioration of a single person's characteristics. A desire to idealize the natural form is apparent. This gives breadth to



FIG. 7. COLONEL JEREMIAH LEE. BY JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, 1769  
*Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford*

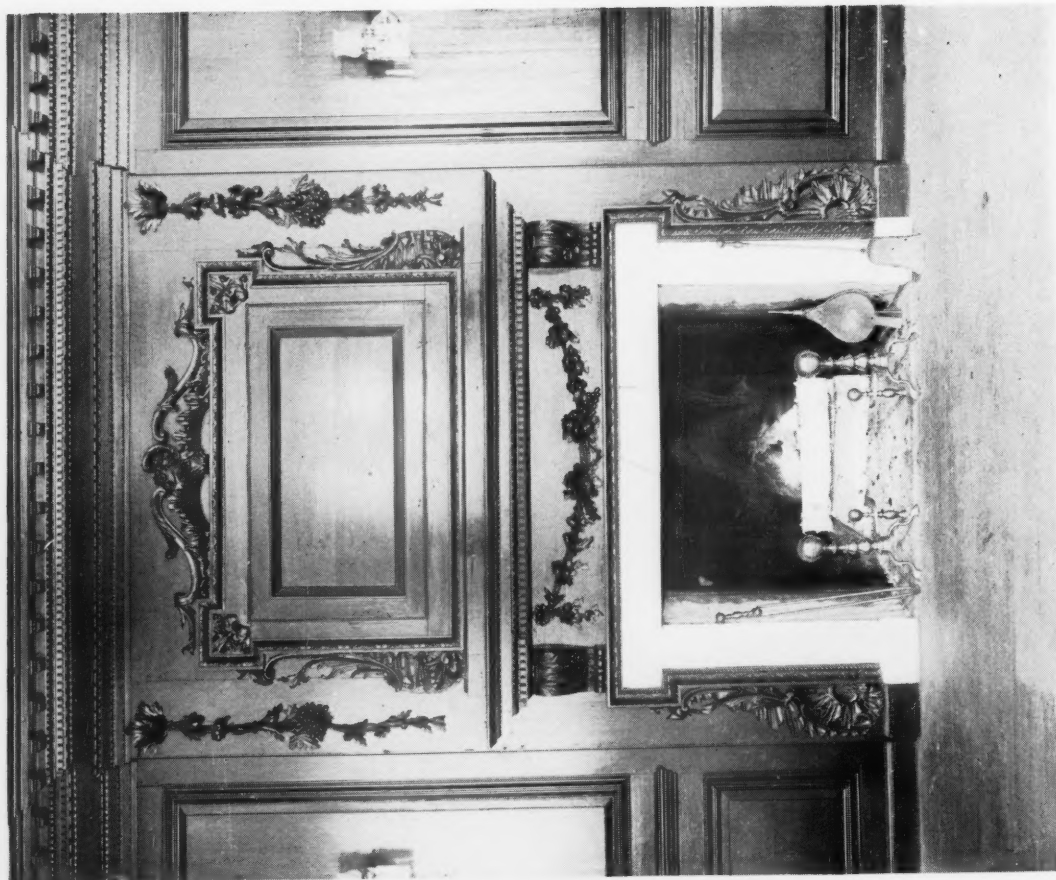


FIG. 8. COLONEL JEREMIAH LEE HOUSE: PINE MANTEL (1768)  
*Marblehead, Massachusetts*



eighteenth-century vision. The Georgian artist tries to establish for his subject one life with the environment that is pictured with him. In the *Colonel Jeremiah Lee* we have an arrangement that is a tough, blunt assertion of the living whole as positive as the mass of *Mount Pleasant*, but without its precision.

In Colonel Lee's Marblehead mansion the "Council Room" displays what may well be the finest carved pine overmantel dating from the second Georgian period (Fig. 8). The mantelpiece follows closely the robust carvings turned out by Grinling Gibbons as a natural grace note for the Palladian classicism of Sir Christopher Wren. In the Marblehead mantel the translation of pine into intricate artifice is almost total. Eighteenth-century avoidance of the meagre is apparent in the balance here between vertical and horizontal panels of carved life. The photograph shows the energetic projection of this carving from an already strong wall but it gives no idea of the attractive life-play of light and shade animating these swags, grape clusters, and console brackets. This is the Georgian period's formal logic of construction in which life's growing forces are easy prisoners of a discreet rule. Georgian classicism is reconciled animation.

The pine carving in Marblehead is strong enough to act in concert with a Copley portrait placed alongside. By comparison with such wall treatment and such portraiture the seventeenth-century craftsmanship strikes us as timid and restricted. The life in eighteenth-century forms is obviously derived from a convention distilled from a mind schooled in refinement that is still conscious of life's claims. It has been a fashionable habit of late to overpraise the seventeenth century for what is taken to be, in that time, an honest confession of the limitations of rudimentary craftsmanship. With this thought goes the corollary, that eighteenth-century art is a studied deceit, a round of strongly-assertive artificialities. In all truth, the Georgian convention raises the materials of the artist to the degree that the medieval craftsmanship lowered them. The latter is a necessary contraction, the former a necessary extension of the possibilities of material nature. One creative activity is as valid as the other. And architecture and the allied arts can only realize their most living potentialities in baroque forms for only these are as richly expressive as cultured or natural life. Baroque technical means alone are inclusive enough to permit their user to assert himself as agreeably in transitional nuance as in energetic mass.

So the Marblehead carving clings to and moves round the croisetted corners of the panel borders like lively strands of healthy growth, as force-



FIG. 9. MISS NANCY PENNINGTON. BY GILBERT STUART, 1805  
*Frances Wister Collection, Philadelphia*

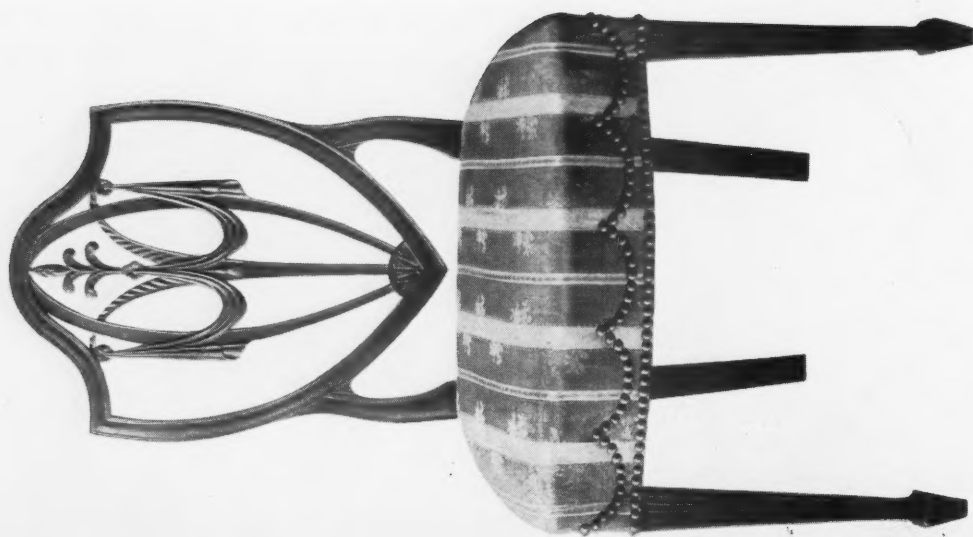


FIG. 10. HEPPLEWHITE-STYLE SIDE CHAIR (c. 1790)  
*Karolik Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

ful in their grip as the ball-and-claw of the Affleck chair. Copley anchors his subjects as impressively in controlled space, making a test or equalization of powers. His color is as firm as the stuff it models. It has the mass of the flesh and costume and cannot be separated from such masses as a merely decorative addition. Decoration in the second Georgian mode is not, contrary to the usual belief, an adventitious addition to structure. It has too much spine. And idealization of a fact is as natural as uninspired recognition of a fact.

The Marblehead mantel should add to the prestige of the classical discipline. And this is so because it reveals how that discipline can blend ingeniously, unobtrusively a sense of organic continuity with geometrical exactness in sequence. Geometry polished to elegant refinement can be as wholesome as the unavoidable geometrical blocking of parts that comes to us in the cruder forms of the seventeenth century. As we have it here in Marblehead or in Boston with the Affleck chair, or at *Mount Pleasant* and the later Copley, the classical discipline traps life's wonder in its conventions without harming it, giving poise and dignity to both.

As persons and as pictures, Copley's subjects are as humanly attractive as any of the toned-down, angular, sharply imprisoned portrait-approximations we owe to the earlier days. Neither in Copley nor the art of his time is there much room for pettiness of temper or cramped outlook. Animation of character through aristocratic control is the program. And it ought not to suffer at the hands of those who see it only as a denial of the real. With reality a handmaid for a statute of limitations that would return mankind to a condition, in some respects abhorrent and ascetic, of childhood. Adult intelligence has its charm.

The basic prosody of construction maintains its place in the second Georgian period. But it also serves as springboard from which greatness of vision is projected. And the period should attract us because it worked on two levels of thought and feeling simultaneously, the levels of art and life, without undue denial of the claims of either. Further on in the century Copley's concentrated living mass will look uncomfortably bold beside the more retiring, gentler, rococo delicacies of a Gilbert Stuart.

Stuart's portrait of Miss Anne Pennington (Fig. 9) has a soft, misty buoyance in harmony with the subject. It brings feminine charm to American art as neatly as Adam architecture or Hepplewhite and Sheraton furniture do. As an un-edged progression through atmospheric space Stuart's study of this girl is not unlike the purity in movement of the contemporary spiral staircase (see Fig. 11) in which the curve of struc-



FIG. 11. GOVERNOR GORE HOUSE: STAIRCASE (1799)  
*Waltham, Massachusetts*

ture is elegantly decorative in three dimensions at once. That which in life would be substantially material is now poeticized in a visual flow of effortless line and color. This is an art of garlanded life exquisitely, recessively wrought. And the Stuart brush hardly dares to touch the canvas for fear it may mar the canvas with suggestions of the force of life. Samuel



McIntire in Salem, in the days of Stuart, used French putty and he carved his wood, with comparable avoidance of the sense of power. McIntire's carving and moulding sink back into the surface as much as Stuart's subject retires from active life.

In Hepplewhite furniture we get what is perhaps the ultimate remove of craftsman and form from Elizabethan or Jacobean inertia (Fig. 10). Hepplewhite attenuates the vigors of Chippendale into thin denial of substance. In the Affleck chair curving outlines were a swelling of the life in the solid confined between the outlines. In Hepplewhite what remains as mass in the delicate chair leg is fluted into thin strips of reed that add to the already bodiless "floating" slightness of its sleek dispositions. The wood now has the slender swiftness of an arrow in flight. This third Georgian period has acuteness rather than breadth of vision. And the simple wholeness of this late style is as valid as the rustic simplicities we had in our beginnings. These phases of American art practice are all ingredients in our heritage. As such they are equally important. Let us keep them so.

### A Fourth Century Ivory Statuette

By MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS  
*Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore*

A SMALL statuette<sup>1</sup> in ivory in the Walters Art Gallery is one of the most pleasing items that can be attributed to the fourth century A. D. It is of a seated child clasping a bunch of grapes and with its head turned towards its left shoulder. It is so cleverly composed that the statuette presents a generally rounded surface on all sides. The figure is beautifully and delicately modelled with a tendency toward the use of flat planes, especially in rendering the folds of flesh. The fruit is highly stylized as is also the rendering of the hair. The eyes are large holes and most likely were originally designed to be filled with glass or stones. The base is turned — a piece is chipped off at the left side. The interior is hollow and is carved to fit over some other object — the statuette may originally have been a knife handle or a decoration on a piece of furniture. Until recently it was covered with dirt which had become fixed with the glue used in mending a break. Most of the glue and dirt have now

<sup>1</sup>Walters Art Gallery. No. 71.602. H. 2 9/16" (.065). D. of base 1 1/8" (.028).



FOURTH CENTURY ROMAN STATUETTE

been carefully removed and the statuette shows itself in renewed splendour as one of the loveliest small objects of its date.<sup>2</sup>

The modelling of the small figure suggests others which have been attributed to the fourth century A. D.<sup>3</sup> Small objects which can be dated more or less accurately in the Early Byzantine period before the fifth century are rare and there are, generally speaking, few objects with which one can make comparisons. The ivory statuette has one characteristic however which enables us to ascribe it with a fair hope of accuracy to the first half of the fourth century A. D. The hair is treated in an individual and distinctive manner. On the head the hair is represented with a series of conventional curves but the ends are done in a series of wave-like motifs with hollow centers, a most unusual manner of conventionalizing the hair. A considerable search seems to demonstrate that this convention was common in Roman sarcophagi of the fourth century A. D. and is rarely to be found elsewhere. Friederich Gerke in his *Christus in der Spätantiken Plastik* (Berlin 1940) gives a series of plates illustrating heads from a series of sarcophagi. He has worked out in this book a sequence for the development of fourth century sculpture and illustrates with enlarged details from the sarcophagi. The curls of hair with the large holes are

<sup>2</sup>The surface of the ivory is untouched by the cleaning.

<sup>3</sup>H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *L'Art Byzantine* I, Paris, 1932, pl. 76 a and c. Now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.



Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

found first on a sarcophagus of about 300-310 in the Lateran Museum.<sup>4</sup> The trait becomes more marked in the sculpture as the century advances. A sarcophagus<sup>5</sup> in the Museo Nazionale in Rome of about 320-25 gives an even closer comparison, a similar rendering of the hair being found on other sarcophagi of about the same date in the Museo Nazionale,<sup>6</sup> and the Lateran.<sup>7</sup> The motif is still in vogue in the 340's<sup>8</sup> but in the middle of the century as on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus it has almost disappeared and is seldom found in the second half of the fourth century. These comparisons would point to the first half of the fourth century as the approximate time when the statuette was made. There is nothing about the statuette to contradict this. It has already been compared for its modelling with another ivory statuette which for other reasons has been given to the fourth century. The greater tendency towards conventionalization and the general flattening out of the muscles and the whole softening up of the modelling points to a transitional period from Roman times to the New Byzantine style which corresponds to an attribution in the early fourth century A. D.

<sup>4</sup>Lateran Museum no. 122. Gerke, *Christus in der Spätantiken Plastik*, fig. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Gerke, *op. cit.*, figs. 16 and 18.

<sup>6</sup>Museo Nazionale no. 455. Gerke, *op. cit.*, fig. 17. Also see fig. 24.

<sup>7</sup>Lateran no. 135. Gerke, *op. cit.*, fig. 19.

Lateran no. 104. Gerke, *op. cit.*, figs. 22-23.

Lateran no. 178. Gerke, *op. cit.*, fig. 26.

<sup>8</sup>Lateran Museum no. 138. Gerke, *op. cit.*, figs. 28-29.

Lateran no. 171. Gerke, *op. cit.*, figs. 43-45.

Several other small ivory statuettes have been vaguely attributed to the third and fourth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Two of these are in Rome, one in the Museo Profaro<sup>10</sup> and one recently found in the Cemetery of Panfilo<sup>11</sup> and placed in the Museo Sacro of the Vatican, while a third<sup>12</sup> is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. These would indicate that the subject in ivory was popular for decorative purposes in the late antique world.

The Walters statuette has no previous known history, beyond having been in a French collection<sup>13</sup> from which it was acquired by Mr. Henry Walters in 1905. Of the two in Rome, one was definitely found in a local cemetery and presumably the other was also. Nothing seems to be known about the earlier history of the two statuettes in London. However the two being found in Rome together with the comparisons of the Walters statuette for the conventional carving of the hair with sarcophagi still in Rome, it is probable that they were popular there. Also the three pieces connected with Rome by being found there or connected stylistically with the sarcophagi can at least be tentatively ascribed to Rome unless other evidence appears which would indicate that they had been made elsewhere.

It has already been pointed out that the motif is not a new one.<sup>14</sup> A seated child holding a lantern,<sup>15</sup> a goose<sup>16</sup> or other object goes back several centuries before the time of the Walters statuette. In the latter this delight of the classical world in child life has been very prettily carried on well into Christian times and the ivory carver has given us not only a beautiful statuette but picked a motif which rightly had been long popular, transforming it with the new conceptions of sculpture which were only beginning but on which the great tradition of the Middle Ages was to be based.

<sup>9</sup>Gerke, *op. cit.*, fig. 50. F. Gerke, *Der Sarkophag des Junius Bassus*, Berlin, 1936, pl. 6.

<sup>10</sup>R. Kanzler, *Gli Avori dei Musei Profano e Sacro della Biblioteca Vaticana*. Rome, 1903, pl. XIV, no. 11 (127). On p. 5 he ascribes it to the IV century A. D.

<sup>11</sup>C. R. Morey, *Gli Oggetti di Avorio e di Osso*. Città del Vaticano, 1936 no. A 15, pl. III. This is said to be from the area in the Panfilo Cemetery which dates from the III-IV century A. D.

<sup>12</sup>Margaret H. Longhurst, *Catalogue of Carvings in Ivory (Victoria and Albert Museum)*, London, 1927, I, p. 17 and pl. II. Miss Longhurst says it is Egyptian, II-IV century A. D. She refers to another in the British Museum which is not familiar to me.

<sup>13</sup>Sale, Paris, May 15-24, 1905, no. 578.

<sup>14</sup>A. Sambon, "Documents d'Art et d'Archeologie: L'Enfant aux Raisins," *Le Musée*, 1906, III, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup>Christine Alexander, "Miscellaneous Accessions in the Classical Department," *Bul. of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1929, p. 204, fig. 4. J. Déchelette, "L'Esclave a la Lanterne," *Revue Archéologique*, 1902, XL, p. 392. R. Zahn, "Lanternarius," *Jhb. der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. XXXVII, 1916, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>E. A. Gardner, "A Statuette Representing a Boy and a Goose," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, VI, 1885, p. 1.



## George Inness, American Landscape Painter

By W. HARLEY RUDKIN  
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POSSIBLY one of the most unreliable phrases in the English language is made up of the words, "self-taught." The implication is that the artisan, craftsman, painter, musician, or bricklayer has not been exposed to a formal technical training at the hands of others. He has not taken scheduled lessons, and the pattern of his work has moved along informal lines dictated by his own abilities and imagination, and for guidance he has been responsible only to himself.

But the phrase leaves out a great deal. It says nothing of heritage; of the undefinable urgencies that make painters and musicians in spite of themselves; of the driving racial need for self-expression that is inseparable from life. It passes lightly over men and the shaping of events; it mentions nothing of the fact that new generations learn from those which have gone before, consciously or not.

The man who has something to say will always have followers. The primitive of today sets the pattern for tomorrow.

In the most narrow concept of the term George Inness, who has emerged from the flamboyance of his era, was "self-taught," and the timeless quality of that teaching is very evident in the 48 canvases of his one-man exhibition which had its première in March at the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum in Springfield, Massachusetts.

This exhibition, selected by Mrs. Cordelia Sargent Pond, director of the Smith Museum, and Miss Elizabeth McCausland of New York City, has obviously been chosen with an eye to presenting all the facets of a calmly contemplative imagination. The catalogue, compiled jointly by Mrs. Pond and Miss McCausland, is completely illustrated and a worthy adjunct to an important artistic event.

The range of the show covers Inness from his early *Surveying*, (1846), through the fine, broad landscapes of his middle period, past his experiments with impressionism, to his latter years, which produced the majestically lighted *Home Of The Heron* (1891), three years before his death.

The times that produced Inness and his art are comprehensively covered by Miss McCausland in the catalogue, and I doubt that further delving into either biographical or historical references would be particularly germane here. It is what came out of those times that will be of primary interest to the gallery-goer.



LANDSCAPE, 1848  
*The California Palace of the Legion of Honor*



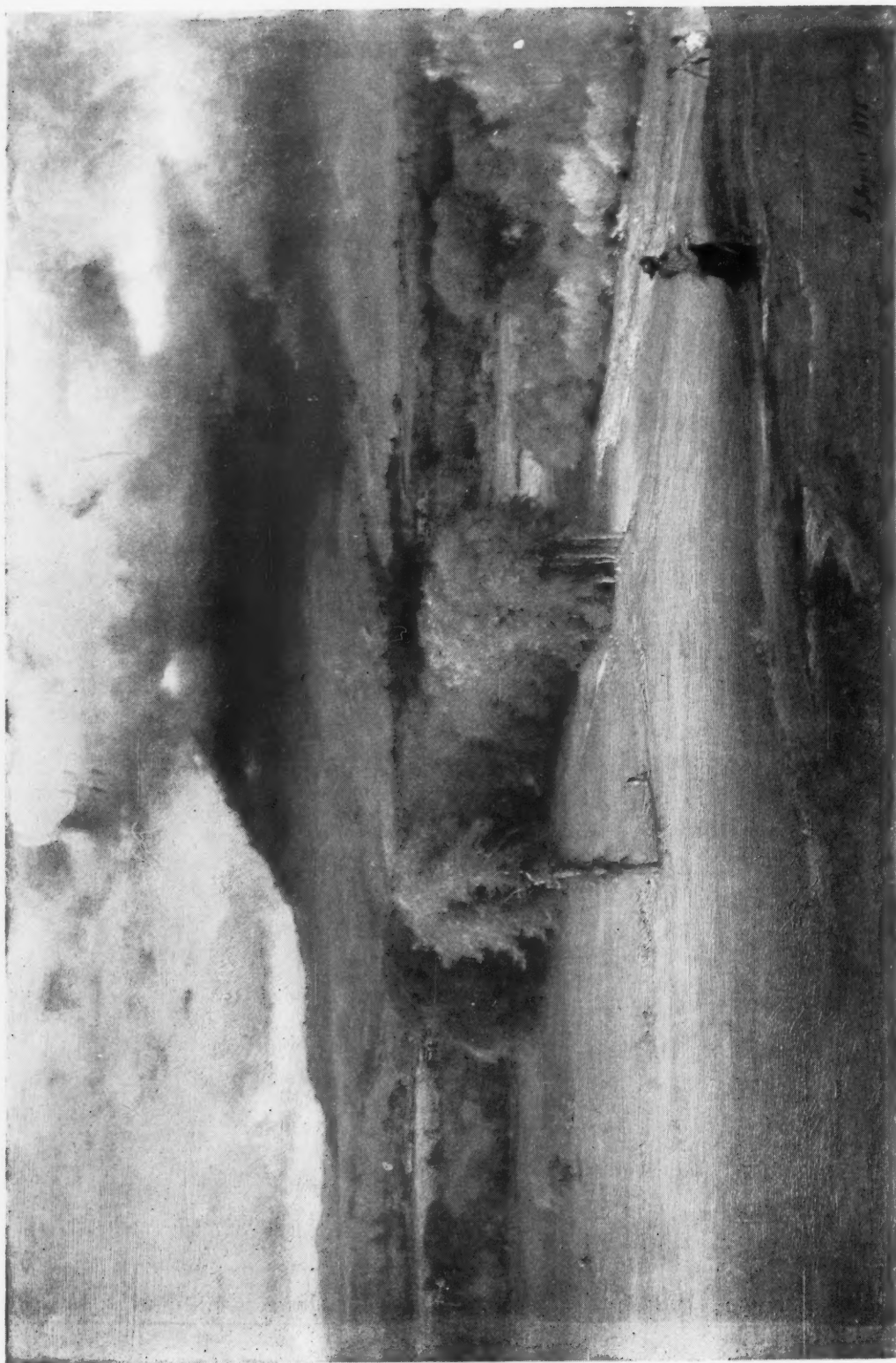
CLEARING UP, 1860  
*The George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum*

The wealth of romantic landscapes is almost overwhelming at first glance, and one acquaintance, stopping at the entrance of the main gallery, was moved to ask, "But isn't this an awful lot of landscape for one show? Won't it get tiresome?" The answer to that, of course, is what one man can do with variations on a theme.

If I were to pick one canvas from this exhibition as an illustration of what a sensitive, and at the same time robust, art can do, I would choose the magnificent *Approaching Storm* (1875), one of the so-called "middle-period" paintings. Here is Inness at his most comfortable best, and by the same token here is American landscape art at the top of a curve.

Particularly congenial to cloud effects, Inness has here combined two of his happiest elements—the wide, lush foreground with its middle-distance trees and strip of sunlight; thunderheads ripening around a partly shadowed hill in the background. When you have absorbed the show, this is a picture to come back to; to leave and revisit. It carries the power and dignity of a noble tradition. It has been loaned to the show by the Fort Worth Art Association.

Another beguiling example from the same period is *Clearing Up*, owned by the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum. Painted in 1860, it again shows the individualist hewing to his line, happy among his peaceful acres, with broad curving stream and adjoining woodland, and nostalgic with serrated banks of clouds.



THE APPROACHING STORM, 1875  
*Fort Worth Art Association*



The swing to impressionism marks the beginning of the final phase. The landscapes are typically fuzzy, and lack the fine meticulous attention to minute landscape detail, typical of his much earlier *Lackawanna Valley* (1855); *Summer* (1850); or *The Old Mill* (1849). These three paintings were loaned respectively by the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

But impressionism did not blind George Inness as an end in itself. That much is visually evident. He would swing to the left and then swing right back again, eternally looking for something — something that would both satisfy his need to move forward and reconcile it with what he liked best to paint.

One of the best examples of this is *June*, painted in 1882 and now the property of the Brooklyn Museum. Here is a definitely impressionistic landscape, but complete with the familiar Inness trees, meadow and stream, despite the unfamiliar treatment. I personally do not find this painting either as satisfying or refreshing as the earlier forms. They are all necessary to any Inness show as representatives of a trend, successful or not.

And if you are looking for comparisons, one of the favorite pastimes



JUNE, 1882  
*The Brooklyn Museum*

of gallery-goers, there is a touch of Corot in the sky of *Italian Landscape*, painted in 1858, and lent anonymously, and the lighting and general effect of his darker canvases are suggestive of Ryder.

But Inness was his own man. He painted what he saw; and what he saw was important.

Included in the exhibition is *Preliminary Preparation for a Painting*, which was purchased from the artist by President L. Clarke Seelye of Smith College, as an unfinished canvas to be used in teaching in the art classes at the college.

Death was not far off when he painted *The Home of the Heron*, now in the possession of the Museum of Historic Art at Princeton University, but his sympathies were still broad, his mind still seeking something. The lighting here is focussed centrally, with the subordinate tones dark and diffuse. It is a lonely picture.

Private and public museums all over the country have contributed to this exhibition, which will be at the Brooklyn Museum from April 15 to May 12, and then at the Montclair Art Museum from May 19 to June 23.

## More About Jennys

By AGNES M. DODS  
Somerville, Mass.

THE series of articles on the Jennys family which have appeared from year to year in various issues of *ART IN AMERICA* have aroused much interest and have resulted in the discovery of several hitherto unknown and unlisted portraits.

No less an authority than William Sawitzky has attributed the portraits of Paul Brigham and his wife, Lydia Sawyer, to the Jennys family. These are owned by the Bennington Historical Museum at Bennington, Vermont. They are similar in size and technique and obviously painted at the same time. They are bust portraits, full faced and set in the greyish oval which is characteristic of all the Jennys painters. According to John Spargo, the director of the Museum, the "drawing is severe, clean and highly competent" with flesh tints unusually well treated.

Brigham, the subject, was born in Coventry, Connecticut, in 1746 and married Lydia Sawyer, October 6, 1768. He settled in Norwich, Ver-



J. WILLIAM JENNY: GENTLEMAN OF THE BREWER FAMILY  
*M. Knodler & Company, New York*



RICHARD JENNY: A LADY  
*Old Print Shop, New York*

mont, in 1782, after serving as a captain in the Revolutionary War. For many years he held prominent public offices, was lieutenant governor twenty-two times in succession and later governor in 1797.

Another portrait recently discovered has been attributed to J. William Jennys by its former owner, Harry Shaw Newman, on the basis of ART IN AMERICA articles. This represents a member of the Brewer family of Connecticut and is here reproduced. The subject, painted within an oval, is wearing a dark coat, white neckcloth and what appears to be a fur cap or unusual wig. The other portrait reproduced was attributed to Richard Jennys on the basis of its resemblance to the portrait of Mrs. Ephraim Williams, published in Jean Lipman's appendix to Frederic Fairchild Sherman's monograph on Richard Jennys.

Several other portraits resembling those of J. William Jennys in technique have also been discovered. These will require further study and research before they can be definitely attributed but it is well to mention them here in hopes that still further light may be shed upon them.

One of these is the portrait of Ashael Pomeroy, 1749-1833, owned by the Northampton Historical Society. The canvas is somewhat large for a Jennys, 40" x 30" and is said to be very indistinctly signed. The figure is posed within an oval, the features carefully delineated and the coloring drab. However, another unusual feature is that the figure is shown almost three-quarters in length, a radical departure from the Jennys style of painting. It is interesting to note that Pomeroy was also painted by Ralph Earl and that the portrait may be seen at the Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Still another pair of portraits owned by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in Deerfield have also been suggested as the work of J. William Jennys. These represent Captain Elihu Field and his wife Pamela Burt and were apparently painted in the early 1800's, a little later than most of the known Jennys portraits, one would assume from the style of clothing worn by the subjects. Again we find the careful delineation of features and the figure within an oval. They conform to other known Jennys portraits in the fact that they are bust length and not too colorful in tone. However, they seem to lack the clear-cut distinction characteristic of Jennys' work.

It is hoped that patient and careful research will attribute these portraits definitely and that others may be discovered, in order that Jennys' travels up the Connecticut Valley from Connecticut to Bennington, Vermont may be traced and documented.



